From Eden

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by Foxtrot (SolidState)

Summary

When Hannibal had looked at him and said “You have ocean eyes, Will.” what he meant was falling in love with Will was unavoidable. A current, an undertow, a riptide that pulled you out and down until the air left your lungs. Until you felt so cool and calm that drowning didn't feel so frightening anymore, more like a gift than a death sentence. Hannibal spent every day like that since the very first moment Will Graham stepped into the room.

Notes

Walks into a fandom 6 years late with a Starbucks 'Sup :)

“Will you draw for me?”

Will Graham couldn't draw like Hannibal could, wasn't sure if that was for better or worse really. The images in Will's mind would be ghastly on paper, they where ghastly in real life - when they flashed before his eyes with wings and hooves and horns. Blood and bone. Hannibal would have loved to see them though. He would have loved to see Will bring the beasts to life with pencil and ink and paint and called it 'art therapy'. He'd seen Hannibal draw the flooded streets of Venice, towering chapels in France, even the looming bones of his house in Wolf Trap but had never once seen Hannibal draw himself. It wasn't like Hannibal didn't draw people like he drew places; he could draw a scene from years ago with such clarity it felt like looking at a photograph, right down to the shine on an officers shoes and he'd drawn Will *plenty*.

Sometimes Will was tucked into a plush wing-back chair, glasses crookedly pushed up his nose as he dozed with a content look on his face. Other times he drew Will with blood splattered up his arms so thick the dark drips falling from his fingers made his hands look like claws. Will never told Hannibal about the time he found the sketches that had been tucked away in the pages of a massive medical textbook, the ones with Abigail's bright smiling face as she and Will walked side-by-side on a gray afternoon. Years ago. Another world. Another life. He'd stared at them for what felt like hours before slamming the book shut and placing it back on the shelf as his hands trembled then spent the rest of the day in bed. If Hannibal ever found out he'd seen them he never said, probably never would.

“Anything you'd like, Will.” Hannibal drawled in that low thick voice, sounding pleased by his request.

“I'd like you. Draw me you.”

Hannibal paused for only a moment as his hand hoovered over the pencils sitting beside the sketchbook laying open on his desk. A lot of people claimed Hannibal was impossible to get a read on, that he was a blank page with nary a scuff on it, but Will knew better and he could see the shadow of something painful flick across the mans face. Equal parts wanting to please Will and not wanting to examine himself the way he did anything else he drew. Will came along the back of Hannibal's chair, draping his arms across his broad shoulders as he leaned over Hannibal to peer at the empty page in front of them.

“The way I see you.” Will clarified and pressed so close they where cheek-to-cheek.

Hannibal relaxed like air being let out of a balloon and grabbed one of the pencils off the desk, giving it a jaunty little spin between his fingers to cover the initial surge of anxiety from Will's request. Very little ever shook Hannibal but Will was often the one to do it and in ways the man rather liked a great deal. If there was anything Hannibal liked it was to be surprised by Will, after all.

“Describe me then, my dear.”

“Bright.” Will said with an earnest sort of intensity, dragging his finger along the blank paper as if seeing the picture in his mind spilling out from where his finger touched. “You're very bright. So bright all the light is sucked out of the room and covers you in pitch...”

He did not describe the high point of Hannibal's cheeks or the bow of his lip, neither the sweep of his ashen hair or the slope of his nose but the man Hannibal drew still had his face if only in the loosest suggestion of it. An inky shadow Hannibal wore like a comfortable old coat.

“No, not like that. You have Autumn eyes.” Will corrected at one point.

Brown and red and golden all at once, the changing of the seasons set into his sharp handsome face. Vivid and dark. Cold and warm. Hannibal simply let out a little hum of acknowledgment and followed along to Will's descriptions with little scratches of pencil to paper that sometimes branched out into big sweeping arcs of his arm. At one point Will paused to untangle himself from around Hannibal's shoulders and instead brought his hands up to either side of his own head, forefinger and thumb out in a childish pantomime of antlers as he laughed bright and airy.

“See? Like this, right here is where they start.”

Hannibal filed the expression away deep in the vast corridors of his memory palace, displayed beneath a glass case pristine and whole for the rest of his life like so many other pieces of Will that lived and breathed inside of him now. An entire castle could be dedicated

to memories of Will alone. There would likely be one by the time they both died, a museum spanning two minds and filled with the echo of each others laughter.

By the time Will was done with his descriptions the page was full of something heady and dark made achingly tender by Will's words breathing life into it. It was the most beautiful Hannibal ever thought he would be and in no small part because it came from Will. Hannibal handed the pad of paper over his shoulder to where Will stood behind him still.

“Amazing.” Will breathed out, soft and secret.

A lot of things inflated Hannibal's *ever growing* ego, some more than others, but none so satisfying as Will's awed words and reverent clutching of the sketchbook. It was impossible not to feel infinite in the face of his approval.

“Your turn, Agent Graham.”

“Oh god, please, you absolutely do not want to see my stick figures.”

“Firstly, I wouldn't be so sure about that.” Frankly the idea of watching Will scribble out inelegant little doodles was so endearing it bordered on saccharine. “Secondly, I am asking to draw you.”

“You draw me plenty already, with and without asking.” Will grinned cheekily at him.

“Not like this.”

Hannibal gestured to the sketch pad still clutched in Will's grip and watched as his cheeks flushed red. Will was more open, bolder, in his disposition and Hannibal found it deeply satiating to watch the expressions roll across his face; a little shy dip of his head to hide behind shaggy curls, the rosy blush that bloomed across his cheeks, mischief that sparked like wildfire in his blue eyes. It would be no hardship at all to sustain himself on the catalog of

Will Graham's idiosyncrasies alone. Will put the sketchbook back down and hoovered a little bashfully at his shoulder.

“Shall I sit for this portrait, Doctor?” Will affected a haughty tone in mockery of some high-society ingenue.

“Certainly.”

Hannibal pulled Will in with an arm around his waist, pushing the plush office chair back from the work desk enough to be able to sit with him on his lap and still reach the sketchbook. Will took up hardly any space, slender as he was after three years of finely concealed misery eating away at his body and a lengthy convalescence following Dolarhyde. He felt waifish, too light and fragile of a weight in Hannibal's lap and the man vowed to ply him with good food in the very near future.

With his chin atop the shaggy fluff of his dark curls it was barely any effort at all to fall into a steady rhythm of drawing again, arm still wound about Wills middle. It was quiet save for the faint echo of voices rising from the street market below and the chirrup of birds flocking past the windows. Occasionally the flash of dark iridescent feathers at the window ledge where an inquisitive bird stopped to twist its little head around the open window, undoubtedly smelling the fruit sitting out on the kitchen counter.

Hannibal said it was called a 'starling'. Brave little birds that nose dived after insects all the way to the ground and sometimes didn't pull themselves back up in time before crushing into the concrete. Will had cried when he found one dead on the sidewalk, unable to articulate why it's crumpled little body devastated him so. He kept it's clean white skull, divided by a massive crack, on the shelf with one of the shimmering tail feathers. Sometimes when Will looked at it he swore he heard the distant echo of an animal braying, a donkey or perhaps a goat or maybe even a lamb.

“You think I am an awful lot prettier than I really am” Will teased, staring down at the graphite sketch as Hannibal worked.

“I think it's rather more likely you need an urgent visit to the optometrist.”

Will snorted a little laugh and leaned back into the firm wall of Hannibal's chest at his back, feeling the light puff of his breath against his throat. Hannibal drew Will like a star gone supernova, a huge black hole that drew all the light to it and held the glow in its molten core. An inescapable force of nature, the destined future of the Sun that fed the Earth, so very warm and so very dangerous and so achingly beautiful that all you could do is stand and stare up as it burst open and left you blind.

When Hannibal had looked at him and said “You have ocean eyes, Will.” what he meant was falling in love with Will was unavoidable. A current, an undertow, a riptide that pulled you out and down until the air left your lungs. Until you felt so cool and calm that drowning didn't feel so frightening anymore, more like a gift than a death sentence. Hannibal spent every day like that since the very first moment Will Graham stepped into the room.

The little bird at the window fluttered away with its flock, dark and shimmering. The exuberant laughter of children running home from school rattled through the streets in a language Will was only just barely beginning to understand. Will's breath soft where his mouth was pressed against Hannibal's skin, breathing in time to the gentle scratch and drag of pencil to paper.

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